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RECENT ARABIC LITERATURE

The Mystics of Islam. By REYNOLD A. NICHOLSON, M.A.,
Litt. D., Hon. LL.D., Lecturer in Persian in the University
of Cambridge. London: G. BELL AND SONS, 1914.
pp. vii + 178.

ALTHOUGH mysticism in its wider sense is nothing more than a pantheistic faith, each religion has produced a mystic system of its own which bears its specific impress. Mystics all the world over are of kindred temperament, but their doctrines are necessarily influenced by race and religion. The general outlines of Kabbalah, Sufism, and Christian mysticism are practically identical, but in the details there are essential differences. The Jewish mystic has the Bible as the centre of his independent speculations, while his Mohammedan brother never loses sight of the Koran. Even in cases where the terms are apparently identical there are different shades of meaning when employed by the mystics of the various religions. As Dr. Nicholson rightly observes, *فناء* of the Sufi and *Nirvāṇa* of the Buddhist, though the terms are synonymous signifying *the passing away of individuality*, have different connotations. For 'while *Nirvāṇa* is purely negative, *fanā* is accompanied by *baqā*, everlasting life in God' (p. 18). It is thus obvious that the study of Sufism is of vast importance for comparative religion and the various phases of human thought. But the material for a comprehensive and exhaustive study of this subject is almost inaccessible, as by far the greater part of the immense literature in Arabic and Persian is still unpublished. This, however, offered no serious difficulty in the preparation of the present volume, which, in accordance with the plan of the *Quest Series*, is designed to give the general outlines of mystic thought in Islam. Dr. Nicholson has admirably acquitted himself of his task, and produced a delightful little book, which is of value

to the layman as well as to the scholar. While various monographs on Sufism have appeared from time to time by some of the foremost exponents of Islam, this book bears the mark of original research, and contains material which has hitherto been inaccessible to students. The author tells us that he has drawn upon material collected by him for the last twenty years, and every paragraph bears testimony to his erudition and insight. In addition to that, the various doctrines are presented in a pleasant and popular form, and this in itself is an achievement when dealing with an abstruse subject.

As to the origin of the name 'Şufi', the Arabs and Persians themselves seem to have lost sight of it long ago, and offered numerous explanations, one more fanciful than the other. In his introduction Dr. Nicholson rejects them all, and rightly adopts the view of Nöldeke who derives the word *Şufi* from *şuf* (wool), the early Muslim ascetics having, in imitation of the Christian hermits, clad themselves in coarse woollen garments. (See also Freytag's *Lexicon*, s. v.) Considerable space is also devoted to the influence exerted over Sufism by Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and Buddhism. Historical evidence points to Buddhism as having more in common with Sufism than any other faith or doctrine. This is especially the case with the Persian mystics, for prior to the Mohammedan conquest of India there had been flourishing Buddhist monasteries in Balkh. Nevertheless there are fundamental differences between the Sufi and the Buddhist. As Dr. Nicholson aptly and pithily puts it, 'The Buddhist moralizes himself, the Sufi becomes moral only through knowing and loving God' (p. 17). Strange as it may seem at first sight, Jewish mysticism, while having many points of contact with Sufism, exerted no direct influence over it. Mohammed, as is well known, borrowed freely from Judaism, and Geiger's *Was hat Muhammed von dem Judenthum aufgenommen?* is by no means exhaustive, although Mittwoch's *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des islamischen Gebets und Kultus* overstates the case. But in the early centuries of Mohammedan supremacy, which set the Oriental mind ablaze, the process of influence was reversed, and

the Jews assimilated Arab culture, representing a happy blending of the products of various races, to their advantage. One need merely refer to the brilliant Spanish epoch, which produced the science of biblical philology in all its ramifications, Jewish philosophy, and Neo-Hebrew poetry, to be convinced of the debt Jews, if not Judaism, owe to the Muslim world. It is possible that Jewish mysticism of the later period did not escape that influence, but the comparative study of Kabbalah is not as yet even in its infancy, and nothing definite can be asserted. A good many of the mystic poems of Ibn Gabirol and Ibn Ezra have their Muslim parallels, and the latter consciously imitated Ibn Sina's *Risalat Hai b. Yaḳẓān*. At the same time it is to be pointed out that there are echoes of biblical mysticism in some of the Sufi poems. Psalms 42 and 63 may be profitably compared in this connexion.

In six chapters Dr. Nicholson describes the most important aspects of Sufism, but it should be remarked that the title of the volume is not quite in harmony with the contents. It is not with the mystics themselves that the author acquaints us, but with some aspects of mystic thought. Chapter I deals with the *Path* which leads to the goal of the Sufi. A comprehensive description is given of the *dhikr*, which Muslim mystics regard as the keystone of practical religion. While Dr. Nicholson successfully explains the significance of this ceremony to the mystic, I do not think he is right in considering the English word 'recollection' the most appropriate equivalent of *dhikr* (p. 45). The *dhikr* seems to be a relic of an ancient form of worship common to the early Semites. In the Koran ذَكَرَ in this connexion should best be rendered 'mention', not 'remember'. Its equivalent is of frequent occurrence in the Bible, where the Hifil form is used. Mention may especially be made of אֶלֶהֵינוּ נִזְכֵּיר (Psalm 20. 8) and הַמְזַכֵּרִים אֶת־יְהוָה (Isa. 62. 6). In the latter case it seems to have a technical sense. There is some evidence that the Kal was used in the same sense, for in Exod. 20. 24 the Hifil is causative. It is not unlikely that the use of the Hifil is due to its being a denominative verb. In these cases the synonym of קרא is זָכַר,

which is by far the more frequent of the two. See e.g. Ps. 105. 1, Deut. 32. 3. This phrase would best be understood if taken to mean a repetition of God's name, and this must have been the ordinary form of worship before prayers in the modern sense were introduced. God knows the innermost secrets of man's heart, and the mere mention of His name is sufficient for invocation. The story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18. 20-40), where this phrase occurs several times, thus becomes very clear. It is to be observed that the Mohammedan formula لا اله الا الله is identical with יהוה הוא האלהים which is repeated twice in verse 39. A remarkable survival in present-day Jewish liturgy is the latter formula, which is repeated seven times on the Day of Atonement. No doubt the number seven has a mystic significance, but the Sufis repeat their formula an indefinite number of times until they become exhausted. The incessant repetition of a word or phrase enables the Sufi to concentrate all his senses on a particular object and to put himself into a trance. At all events the idea of 'recollection' does not suit here.

The other chapters deal with Illumination and Ecstasy, the Gnosis, Divine Love, Saints and Miracles, and the Unitive State. The fourth chapter, Divine Love, is perhaps the most interesting, and many of the extracts recall passages from the Zohar. Throughout the book Dr. Nicholson carefully avoids giving a mere list of names and books, and rightly sacrifices completeness for the sake of clarity. This volume is not a *résumé* of a larger work, which, we are told, the author is preparing, but a selection of interesting aspects of Sufism. In such a mode of treatment no two writers would agree as to the most appropriate selections. Every scholar has his favourite authors and books, to which he may unconsciously give undue prominence, while omitting others altogether. This becomes apparent when one notices that the greater part of the quotations is excerpted from Niffari, an unknown wandering dervish, whose Arabic book Dr. Nicholson is editing, and from Jalaluddin Rumi. On the other hand, there is not a single reference to the Egyptian poet Omar b. al-Farid, whose poems, especially the *al-Ta'yyah al-Kubra*, have been read with

delight by mystics as well as by general readers of Arabic poetry. Nor is there a single quotation from the melodious and tender poems of Majnun (the madman) about Layla, to whom the author of the *Kitab al-Aghani* devotes considerable space. Dr. Nicholson refers to him only by the way. This is, however, a matter of taste, and the author certainly has a right to be guided by his own prejudices and predilections.

The Treaty of Mişr in Ṭabari: an essay in historical criticism.

By A. J. BUTLER, D.Litt., Fellow of Brasenose College.
Oxford: at the CLARENDON PRESS, 1913. pp. 87.

Babylon of Egypt: a study in the history of Old Cairo. By A. J. BUTLER, D.Litt., Fellow of Brasenose College. Oxford: at the CLARENDON PRESS, 1914. pp. 64.

The conquest of Egypt during the early days of the rise of Islam offers fascinating material for the historian. But, as is the case with almost all important periods in the history of mankind, the details of this event have not hitherto been cleared up. This is largely due to the uncertainty of the sources upon which the investigations into this subject are based. The Arab historians, especially Ṭabari, have described this period at full length, but there is sufficient ground to question the authenticity of some of their statements. The difficulties are still more enhanced by the Coptic authorities whose version does not always coincide with that of the Arabs. In order to arrive at definite conclusions, the modern historian is accordingly obliged first of all to give an accurate interpretation of the texts of the Arabic and Coptic writers and then weigh the validity of the statements of one native author against those of the other. There is obviously room for divergence of opinion. A deplorable tendency of some modern historians is to generalize too readily and to discredit one source because some of its statements have proved erroneous, while putting implicit faith in another. Not infre-

quently racial and religious bias has played an important part in investigations of this kind. Coptic writers, being Christians, are regarded by some Christian historians as more trustworthy than the Arabs. But the unbiassed investigator knows no generalities, and judges each detail on its own merits.

Some time ago Dr. A. J. Butler published an excellent volume entitled *The Arab Conquest of Egypt* (Oxford, 1902), which was based upon a careful and painstaking study of the original sources. Owing to the difficulty of the subject, he naturally had to make use of conjectures and combinations, some of which have not stood the test of minute criticism. Stanley Lane-Poole, another erudite Arabist and brilliant student of that period, offered different theories and interpretations of some of the texts, and Dr. Butler, as a fearless investigator, now returns to the subject to revise some of his former conclusions which have proved untenable, and to defend others against which ill-founded objections have been raised. At present he limits the scope of his investigation to the study of some of the traditions recorded by Ṭabari, especially in connexion with the treaty of Miṣr. For some reason or other, Dr. Butler had used Zotenberg's edition, and by referring to de Goeje's work, he was able to correct some of his views. He chiefly takes issue with Lane-Poole, and gives a detailed investigation of the time and place of the treaty, the parties to the treaty, the meaning of the treaty, the authenticity of the treaty; the identity of al-Muḩauḩis. Two of the most important points where he seems to have proved his case satisfactorily may be given here. In the treaty occurs the clause *ولا يسكنهم النوب*. A great deal depends upon the accurate interpretation of the word *النوب* which occurs three times in the text (once *النوبة*). Dr. Butler defends the view which takes this word to signify *Nubians*, and renders the clause: 'The Nubians shall not settle among them' (p. 34). A striking similarity occurs in the Treaty of Jerusalem, which contains the following clause: 'None of the Jews shall dwell with them in Jerusalem.' Lane-Poole offers a novel interpretation of this word which he renders *garrisons*. Etymologically this translation is equally pos-

sible, Dr. Butler's opinion notwithstanding. Even Freytag, on the authority of native lexicographers, gives the meaning *hominum agmen*, from which the idea of *garrison* can easily be derived. The objection that 'there is no authority for its use in the sense of *garrisons* at so early a date' (p. 38) is not of sufficient weight, as we do not at present possess even the material for an historical Arabic lexicon, the greater part of the literature still being unpublished. There is, however, a textual difficulty which renders Lane-Poole's explanation untenable. In one sentence of the treaty the phrase الروم والنوب is used. Now as the garrisons are supposed to be Roman, the expression 'the Romans and the garrisons' is quite unintelligible. This argument in itself is of sufficient cogency to establish the accuracy of Dr. Butler's view.

The other case which is also established in favour of Dr. Butler is in connexion with the identity of al-Muḳauḳis. Here, too, the evidence is conflicting, but a thorough examination of the various passages would lead one to identify al-Muḳauḳis with Cyrus, 'the imperial patriarch and viceroy'. The evidence from the Coptic writers supports this identification, and practically excludes any other hypothesis; it is among the Arab authors that confusion and uncertainty exist. While it is true that Dr. Butler has a tendency to disparage the Arab writers, it must be admitted that in this instance his disinclination to give credence to their statements is fully justified. These writers, as he rightly points out, seem to have caught the name al-Muḳauḳis by hearsay or tradition without understanding it. Nothing is gained by Stanley Lane-Poole's attempt to identify al-Muḳauḳis with some sub-governor, and the combined evidence skilfully marshalled by Dr. Butler is overwhelmingly against this view.

Many ancient and mediaeval writers—Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Arabian—speak of *Babylon of Egypt*, but some uncertainty exists as to the exact usage of this term at the time of the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt. All modern scholars have been practically unanimous in assuming that the site of this Babylon is somewhere in the region of Fustaṭ or Old Cairo. But the exact definition has hitherto been a matter of doubt. Some

native writers narrowed this term down to a Roman fortress built by Trajan and called *Qaşr al-Shama'*, but there are passages which unmistakably point to a city called by that name. As this question is of importance for the history and topography of the Arab conquest, Dr. Butler has exhaustively examined all the available material, and lays the result of his investigations before the scholarly world. He sets out to establish three propositions: (1) Babylon was the recognized name of a town or city of great importance many centuries before the conquest; (2) the term was so understood at the time of the conquest; (3) this usage prevailed for some centuries after the conquest. He begins with Diodorus Siculus who relates that a number of prisoners from Asiatic Babylon seized a strong position on the Nile, and founded a settlement which they called Babylon. This city was known to Josephus, Strabo, Ptolemy, and others. Ptolemy especially is definite in his description, and tells us of a canal flowing through the city of Babylon. The cumulative evidence adduced by Dr. Butler absolutely militates against Pauly who contests the view that the name Babylon in Egypt had a real historical origin. Later on the name *Fuṣṭāṭ*, the origin of which is the Byzantine *Φουστᾶτον*, supplanted that of Babylon whose exact signification was therefore forgotten. The latter term survived in Coptic. Mohammedan authors who flourished centuries after the conquest speak of Babylon as if it were merely a fortress. Their evidence, however, is inconclusive, and is obviously outweighed by that of the earlier writers. Moreover these statements are not mutually exclusive. The fact that there was a city named Babylon does not preclude the possibility of there having been a fortress in that city bearing its name. Dr. Butler aptly reminds us of the City of London and the Tower of London.

As Dr. Butler's essay is historical and geographical, it naturally contains few textual notes. There is, however, one remark which should be slightly modified. In quoting the geographer Idrisi, who has the name *بنبلونه*, he observes that 'the first *ن* is clearly a copyist's error' (p. 39, note 2). But it is more likely that the mistake lies in the diacritical points: *بنبلونه* should be read *ببيلونه*.

The confusion of diacritical marks has often caused difficulty to editors of Arabic texts. Karaitic writers especially were in the habit of omitting most of these marks.

Über das Ehe- und Familienrecht der Mohammedaner. Von
DR. EMERICH VON KAURIMSKY. Wien: MANZSCHE K. U. K.
HOF- VERLAGS -UND UNIVERSITÄTS-BUCHHANDLUNG, 1914.
pp. vi + 81.

Even residents in Mohammedan countries find it difficult to familiarize themselves with the internal life of the Muslims. It is not so much mistrust as his peculiar standpoint of morality that makes the Mohammedan taciturn about his private affairs. He rarely, if ever, speaks of his family life, and will certainly not allow a stranger to cultivate the acquaintance of the female members of his household. It is therefore not surprising that the average European has distorted notions about the moral standard of the followers of Mohammed. But the student interested in Islamic institutions has no difficulty in obtaining ample information from Arabic literature. The Mohammedans, like the adherents of all other important religious creeds, have codified their laws which are still binding upon every 'true believer'. Dr. Emerich von Kaurimsky has collected the most characteristic laws appertaining to marriage, divorce, and family life in general, and presented them in popular form for the benefit of readers who are not acquainted with the Arabic language. He bases his studies on the Koran, on the books of the Abu Hanifite school, on the decisions, and on other codes. He correctly points out that the fundamental difference between some of these laws and those in vogue among European nations is due to the different aims of marriage. To the Mohammedan, marriage is merely a means of propagating the human race, and the idea of partnership for life is almost entirely absent.

The Arabist will hardly find any new material in this little

volume, which is obviously not intended for him, although the author usually gives a transcription of some of the technical terms. It is, however, the student of sociology who will derive accurate and reliable information about the inner mode of life of hundreds of millions of the human race. The European reader will find it strange that the bridegroom has to give a certain sum of money as dowry (مهر) to the bride, her parent, or guardian. This involves the idea of acquisition, which was shared by the ancient Hebrews, who also gave כהנר (see Exod. 22. 16), and with whom the verbs for *marrying* signified *buying* (נשא, קנה, לקח). Incidentally this law sometimes protected the woman against divorce, or expulsion, as the Arabs and Hebrews call it (גרש, طلق). Other points of interest will be found in connexion with the laws prohibiting the marriage of certain classes of relatives (which include a wet-nurse), the laws of inheritance, and the laws of a minor.

Verneinungs- und Fragepartikeln und Verwantes im Kur'ān.

Ein Beitrag zur historischen Grammatik des Arabischen.

Von Dr. phil. GOTTHELF BERGSTRÄSSER, Privatdozent an der Universität Leipzig. Leipzig: J. C. HENRICH, 1914. pp. 108.

During the golden period of their literature, the Arabs devoted a considerable part of their ability to the study of grammar and lexicography. The teachers at the schools of Basrah and Kufah produced an amazing number of grammatical works in which every minute detail was discussed and explained in various ways. Some idea of the magnitude of the labour of the Arabs in this field may be gained from Howell's monumental work. It is therefore surprising that historical grammars and lexica of the Arabic language are still a desideratum. This, to some extent, indicates a lack of interest in Arabic philology on the part of modern European scholars. The difficulty of such

a work must not be underrated. Arabic literature is exceedingly vast and not easily accessible to scholars, and it is obvious that a grammar or lexicon based on a small portion of the literature would not be much in advance of the existing books. Nevertheless, sporadic attempts to elucidate various details should be heartily encouraged, as they may form the nucleus for a comprehensive work. Dr. Bergsträsser confines himself in his present volume mainly to the usage of the negative and interrogative particles occurring in the Koran. With great assiduity he has collected all the passages and classified them into various groups. Each chapter begins with a statement about the usage of the particle under discussion: this is followed by an exhaustive table of the verses containing that particle, while the lengthy notes frequently explain its exact force in the various sentences in the Koran. This in itself is a praiseworthy achievement. As a source for variants, Dr. Bergsträsser made use of the commentaries by native writers, especially those by Zamahshari and Baiḍawī. He also consulted the works of modern European grammarians.

It must be admitted that the material thus collected and classified does not advance our knowledge of the development of Arabic grammar to a considerable extent. The passages are mechanically grouped together, and do not seem to yield much beyond the statistical results. The facts are well registered, but there is a lack of insight into the niceties of the language. A conspicuous instance may be given in connexion with the particle *laisa* (chap. 4, pp. 17-20). This is a negative particle which derives its particular force from the preposition with which it is combined. لَيْسَ has a different signification from لَيْسَ بِهِ or لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ, but this is entirely due to the preposition used in each case and not to the inherent force of لَيْسَ. And yet Dr. Bergsträsser groups the verses together in accordance with the prepositions. This is as illogical as to treat the different meanings of مَا عَلِمْتُ and مَا دُمْتُ under مَا.

Abū 'l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī's Annals entitled an-Nujūm az-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wal-Kāhira. Edited by WILLIAM POPPER. Vol. VI, Part 1, No. 1. Berkeley: at the UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 1915. pp. vi + 164. Vol. VI, Part 1, No. 2, 1916. pp. 155-321.

The enormous literature of the Arabs abounds in historical works which may justly fill the Jewish historian with envy. In the entire range of post-biblical literature the purely historical books are a negligible quantity, and it is with overwhelming joy that the student clutches even at a faded and tattered fragment containing a list of names, which is accidentally discovered. How strangely the 'scraps and bits' used as sources for Jewish history contrast with the bulky volumes of the Arabs describing every detail! Nothing is too trivial for the Arab historians. They take the trouble of describing every minute point as they know it, and give a chain of authorities from whom their information is derived. While the native chroniclers are not always reliable, for due allowance must be made for the prejudices and idiosyncrasies of individuals, the modern investigator of the various phases of the history of the Arabs has ample material to draw upon, and is generally spared the task of 'making bricks without straw'. To be sure, he has to use his judgement as to the accuracy of every detail, but the general trend of events is, as a rule, quite plain. When Weil wrote his *Geschichte der Chalifen* he excerpted from the native writers, and had no need of making ingenious conjectures. But a writer of the gaonic period is obliged to guess and to fill in the gaps by making clever combinations and taking the clue from an accidental remark which occurs in an obscure book. And when a structure has been plausibly erected, it not infrequently falls to pieces through the discovery of a fragment.

Among the Arab historians of the fifteenth century Abu 'l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī occupies a prominent position. His style, it is true, is not very graceful, and in many places it approaches the Arabic dialect spoken in Egypt in our own times.

He also lacks that graphic vividness which characterizes Ṭabari, Ibn al-Athir, Ibn al-Ṭīkṭīka, and many others. But his works are full of detailed information, and as he draws near his own times he presents the faithful record of an eye-witness. His father took a leading part in the wars against Tamerlane, and his description of that period, although not unprejudiced, has the merit of being a faithful account from the sultan's point of view.

Professor Popper is to be congratulated on his assiduity in continuing the publication of these *Annals*. Thus far he has published the second volume and part of the third, and now he offers two parts of Vol. VI. He promises to give later on the completion of the third volume and to publish Vols. IV and V. The text, which is based on all available manuscripts, is well edited, and the high standard of the preceding volumes is successfully maintained. An eclectic text is offered, and the editor selected those readings which he deemed the most appropriate. In some cases the variants are of a grammatical nature, and the editor usually adopted those readings which are supported by our present knowledge of Arabic grammar. This is obviously a precarious mode of procedure, as it is quite likely that the 'grammatical' reading is a copyist's correction, while the 'ungrammatical' one may be dialectic and peculiar to the author. However, as there are no other criteria, grammar may arbitrarily be regarded as a guide. One instance should be mentioned where the editor did not choose the better reading. ناظر هذا الكتاب of the text (p. 73, l. 15) is inferior to الناظر في هذا الكتاب recorded in note *m*. The editor's notes, which are concise and not very numerous, deal mostly with textual variants, but now and again light is thrown on obscure words and expressions. The primary object of this edition is to make the *Annals* accessible to scholars, and there is hardly any necessity of giving too many explanatory notes. I should like to point out that note *e* of p. 51 ought to be modified. Professor Popper has rightly adopted the reading الرمم, which suits the context most admirably; but I cannot agree with him that the variant الرحم may stand for الزحم, which is hardly suitable. It seems to me that in a cursive hand الرمم would be

easily misread as *الرحم*. There are also a few corrections to be made in connexion with the poetic quotations. P. 160, l. 10, the metre demands the vocalization *سبعة الطويل*. Insert the word *الطويل* at the end of l. 18, p. 301. The poem beginning with p. 302, l. 10, is correctly given as Kamil, but the first word does not scan. Read perhaps *وليل*. *Ibid.*, l. 13: vocalize *أهم*. Instead of *قلبي* read *قلبي* (*ibid.*, l. 18).

An important improvement introduced in this volume is the dates on the margin. This naturally facilitates reference to this work. A further improvement may be suggested for the future volumes, namely, the introduction of suitable headings for the various paragraphs. These headings may best be placed on the margin, to indicate that they do not form part of the text. The necessity of such headings may be realized from the fact that pp. 1-135 run practically under one heading. Only on the margin of pp. 73-85, dealing with the biography of Tamerlane, do we have the specified heading *ترجمة تيمور*. There are many other important sub-divisions which can easily be specified in a similar manner.

These two parts of the volume extend over 321 closely printed pages, and cover a period of fifteen years (801-815 A.H.). They treat of the first sultanate of al-Naṣir Faraj b. Barḳuḳ (801-808), the brief sultanate of Maṣṣur 'Abd al-'Aziz, the second sultanate of al-Naṣir Faraj b. Barḳuḳ (808-815), and the beginning of the sultanate of al-Musta'in billahi al-'Abbas. Ibn Taḡri Birdi follows up his method most consistently. As in the preceding volumes, he gives a detailed description of the events during each period, and then takes up every year separately, devoting considerable space to the prominent men who died during that time. Very pathetic is the necrology during the years of Tamerlane's campaigns. About the year 803 the author remarks: 'Only God knows the number of people who died by his (Tamerlane's) sword during that year' (p. 143). The state of the Nile is also recorded for each year. Tamerlane's exploits and cruel acts are described at full length. He is naturally represented as the conventional tyrant, and his physical deformities are particularly emphasized.

The author considered it necessary to make a long digression, devoting several pages to some incidents in Tamerlane's life. He relates that the tyrant was born with his hands filled with blood, which indicated that he would shed blood (p. 74). A curious account is given of his death (pp. 279 ff.), which reminds one of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. At the same time Ibn Tag̃ri Birdi pays a glowing tribute to Tamerlane's bravery and to his love of knowledge. For further details he refers the reader to his book entitled *al-manhal al-ṣāfi wal-mustaufi ba'da al-wāfi*. In general his descriptions tally with the character of 'Timour by the English poet Matthew Gregory Lewis.

رسالة عبد الله بن اسمعيل الهاشمي الى عبد المسيح بن اسحق الكندي يدعوه بها الى الاسلام ورسالة الكندي الى الهاشمي يرد بها عليه ويدعوه الى النصرانية. London: BIBLE LANDS MISSIONS' AID SOCIETY, 1912. pp. 181.

رسالة الدليل الى سواء السبيل. London: BIBLE LANDS MISSIONS AID SOCIETY (?). pp. 167.

Christian missionaries view with grave concern the rapid spread of Islam in Africa and other parts of the world where Arabic is spoken. Mohammedans, on the other hand, point with pride to the circumstance that rarely does one of their coreligionists embrace Christianity. The failure of Christians in that direction has usually been attributed to the lack of books in Arabic to explain the tenets of Christianity to the followers of Muhammed. To be sure, the Syrian Christians and the Copts, whose mother-tongue is Arabic, have a literature of their own, but the Orientals do not employ the proselytizing methods of the Western missionary. It is necessary to master the tenets of Islam before one would attempt to refute them. The Syrian Christians and Copts, however, would rarely venture to read even the Koran, and they are therefore hardly qualified to produce controversial literature. Still, apologetic books in Arabic appear

from time to time. One of the books of this character is the so-called *Apology of Al-Kindi*, which caused somewhat of a sensation some years ago. It was published by the Turkish Mission Aid Society, and in 1882 Sir William Muir printed an essay attempting to prove the authenticity of this book. See *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S., Vol. 14 (1882), pp. 1-18, 317-18. The first book, whose Arabic title is given above, is a reprint of this *Apology*, and it may not be amiss to point out the untenability of Muir's view.

The book contains two epistles, one written by 'Abd Allah b. Ismail the Hashimite inviting his friend 'Abd al-Masih b. Ishak the Kindite to embrace Islam, while the second is by the Kindite refuting all the arguments in favour of Islam and inviting the Hashimite to adopt the Christian faith. This information is given on the title-page, and it is further specified that the two supposed writers flourished during the khalifate of al-Ma'mun about the year 861. While the *Apology* is not explicitly ascribed to al-Kindi, the famous philosopher of the Arabs, and the note at the end of the book tells us that it is not known how closely related the author was to the philosopher, there is some insinuation that the apologist was a celebrated personage, and this gave rise to the confusion of the names. Before the advent of Muhammed, the tribe of Kindah was under the influence of Judaism, and it is not unlikely that some members were adherents to Christianity, but later they seemed to have become Muslims. D'Herbelot's view that the philosopher was a Jew was convincingly refuted by De Sacy (see *Relation de l'Égypte par Abd Allatif*, p. 417). Similar attempts to prove that he was a Christian have also failed. He was a Muslim, although he was persecuted by his coreligionists for his heretical doctrines. It is therefore quite obvious that the philosopher could not have been the author of the *Apology*. Muir rightly dismisses this ascription, but thinks that there were a Kindite and a Hashimite at the court of al-Ma'mun, contemporaries of the philosophers, and that they respectively wrote the epistles. His main support is al-Biruni's statement: 'Likewise 'Abd al-Masih b. Ishak al-Kindi, the Christian, in his reply to the

Book of 'Abd Allah b. Ismail al-Hashimi, relates of them (the Sabeans) that they are notorious for human sacrifice, but that at present they are not able to practise it openly' (*Chronology of Ancient Nations*, ed. Sachau, p. 187). Nothing, however, is known of this al-Kindi or al-Hashimi, and al-Biruni's remark, even if it is genuine, does not tell us about the age during which these writers flourished. Al-Biruni lived at the end of the tenth century, and the apologist may have been his contemporary. Moreover, there is not a particle of evidence to identify these epistles with the books referred to by al-Biruni. A careful reading of the book would lead one to the inevitable conclusion that both epistles were written by one and the same man. In the present edition al-Hashimi's epistle occupies only twenty-three pages, while al-Kindi is allowed one hundred and thirty pages to 'state his case'. The latter epistle teems with quotations from the Old and New Testaments, and reminds one of the Yiddish pamphlets of this nature. All the supposed 'Christological passages' are quoted and explained, and the author has very uncomplimentary references to Judaism and Islam. He naturally passes severer judgement on the former, as the prospective convert must after all be treated with some consideration. This is by no means a 'pious fraud'. It is quite legitimate for an author to take two fictitious characters and put into their mouths arguments through which the superiority of his own doctrines becomes manifest. Judah ha-Levi skilfully employed this literary mode of expression in his *al-Khazari*, and nobody is asked to believe that the conversations actually took place. As a matter of fact the preface to the epistles bears out my contention. It says: 'It has been related that in the time of al-Ma'mun there lived a man, one of foremost of the Hashimites, (I think he was of the descendants of 'Abbas), . . . famous for piety and adherence to Islam. . . . He had a friend, a Kindite, famous for his adherence to Christianity, in the service of the khalif. . . . For some reason or other, we are unwilling to mention their names. The Hashimite wrote the following letter to the Christian.' Who is the author of this preface? It could not have been written by a later editor or copyist, as there is no conceivable reason why he should suppress

their names. The only possible explanation is that the author, before giving the epistles, tells us vaguely who his characters are. He naturally did not want to ascribe his epistles to definite persons. This will also explain another difficulty. Muir remarked that it was strange and unaccountable that this book was not better known and valued in Christian countries. It would indeed be unaccountable, were the book to have been written by a prominent man of the middle of the tenth century; but the difficulty disappears, if we assume that the epistles are the work of a Nestorian or Jacobite Christian who lived many centuries after al-Ma'mun. Muir lays great stress upon the style of the book. But, as far as this is concerned, the book could have been written to-day by a Maranite or Coptic priest, especially with the aid of a Western missionary. The Arabic dailies, weeklies, and monthlies, published in Egypt and Syria, contain articles that surpass the epistles in rhetorical power. We are told by the editor at the end of the book that he made use of transcripts of two manuscripts, one of which is stored in a library in Constantinople, while the other belongs to one of the libraries of Egypt (or Cairo; مصر is ambiguous). These manuscripts bear no date, and do not give the name of the copyist. The vagueness of the description naturally adds to our suspicion.

The second book, the title of which may be translated 'The Guide to the Right Path', is anonymous, and does not bear the date or place of publication. Presumably it was issued from the same press and about the same time as the 'two epistles'. It contains ten chapters in which specific Mohammedan traditions are refuted. Each tradition is given at full length, and then examined and proved to be impossible. The author displays a thorough mastery of Mohammedan theology and traditions. His style is rather good, but it has the faults common to many modern Arabic writers who are fond of verbosity. In its mode of treatment it is similar to the *Manar al-Hakk*, or *The Beacon*, translated into English by Muir (London, 1894).

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